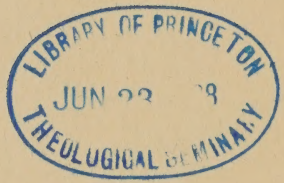

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Meditations in season on the
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Meditations in Season

MEDITATIONS IN SEASON

On the Elements of Christian Philosophy

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BY

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TO RAYMOND C. KNOX

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Advent · Dies Irae

For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.

MARK 9:49, 50.

ONE day Jesus found his disciples quarrelling. Which of them, they were asking each other, would be the greatest? Jesus rebuked them, bidding them mind the children if they would be great. But they persisted, John explaining that the issue was not merely personal but involved the very nature of discipleship. They had just discovered a man doing wonders in the name of Jesus and had forbidden him to continue unless he joined the official band of Christ's elect. Who has a right to be called a follower of Christ? There must be some sort of order, union, or organization. If another would work wonders, should he not at least be compelled to work them in his own name? And so the argument went. Jesus replied: "Do

not stop him, for any man who does wonders in my name is not apt to do me harm. If he is not against us, let him be regarded as one of us." Evidently the disciples were shocked at this. How could such a policy be justified either on principles of right or of expediency? No church could be built on such foundations. Jesus continued, however, with these fierce words: "But *you* (you self-conscious, chosen disciples) if your hands or feet become offensive, cut them off. If your eyes offend, pluck them out. It were better that you enter life eternal maimed than that you and your whole body be cast into hell fire. For every one shall be salted with fire, just as every sacrifice must be salted with salt. Salt is good; but if the salt have lost its saltiness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves and have peace one with another."

Those who imagine that Christian doctrine is primarily concerned with sacrifice are inclined to forget that "every sacrifice must be salted." It is no doubt comforting

to think that, though we may be stupid, miserable, and disagreeable to our fellows, though our "hands or feet or eyes become offensive," we can make ourselves acceptable to God through the mere act of sacrifice. Any sacrifice, we believe, is automatically salted. We imagine, as did the original disciples, that God rewards relative merits according to degrees of sacrifice instead of according to wonders performed. But God is no less particular than our fellows; to be acceptable to Him even a sacrifice must be good. Sacrifice is no short-cut to salvation; all depends on the quality of the sacrifice. In fact, the ethics of sacrifice, the appeal to heroism, is commonplace and relatively easy. It is not true that the unregenerate act wholly from self-love. Making sacrifices is a natural animal trait. If all sacrifices were accepted, few souls would be damned. To give away life itself for an idea or a passion is all too human. Men have always found more satisfaction in glorious deaths than in "having peace one with another." Any leader who

demands sacrifices can have any number of followers, especially young ones. Courage and loyalty are the primary virtues of immature minds.

God, therefore, is not primarily interested in sacrifice but in the "salt" that makes it good. In other words, problems of duty, loyalty, and devotion are not the primary concerns of Christian thought. Morality does not require religion, for man is naturally sensitive to judgments of right and wrong. The social discipline of the emotions is enough to generate virtue. But beyond virtue is excellence; beyond the sense of duty is the knowledge of the good. Christian philosophers have been concerned consciously or unconsciously with the good rather than with the right, with the "saltiness of salt" to God rather than with the readiness of man to sacrifice.

It is not easy to explain how sacrifices are salted. It is a common fact and deep tragedy that sacrifices, though nobly conceived, even consciously made for something good, often

fall flat. For some reason, when God tastes it, the salt itself is not salty. This truth is impressively stated in André Gide's *Counterfeiters*. Here is a society of persons, the salt of the earth, each possessed of a distinctive virtue, an interesting character. But in each the salt has lost its flavor. The essential virtues of these persons have lost their virtue. Like salt, a virtue spoils when over-exposed; it is good only when it is a hidden ingredient, permeating everything, giving flavor and specific excellence to what it seasons, but remaining itself indistinguishable. It is therefore no accident that the text reads, "have salt *in* yourselves," not "on you." When displayed conspicuously, like haloes, virtues lose their virtue. Those who are not content to *be* virtuous but wish to be self-consciously so, run the risk of losing what virtue they have. And once the salt has lost its saltiness, "wherewith will ye season *it?*" This is the tragedy and the difficulty: salt cannot be salted. If morals could redeem themselves, human life and Christian theology would be

much simpler. But corrupted righteousness is not restored by more righteousness. The soul must have some other resource. Its moral complacency must usually be broken down by some "act of God" or revelation.

The poem of *Job* is the classic expression of this theme, and it springs apparently from the same general doubts that worried Jesus' disciples and haunted other followers of the prophets. To rely on one's own integrity is a human right essential to human society; but to insist on one's integrity before God eventually produces the most abject humiliation. For God in His glory does not study human law, nor measure men by their gifts, contracts, and intentions. He speaks with the voice of nature and measures performance in terms of His own creation. He speaks the language of achievement, and His beauty is like that of the morning stars. He is overwhelming. He speaks to both the just and the unjust, not of justice, but of creation. To defy such a being in terms of human

rules and regulations of sacrifice or justice may be a Promethean virtue, but in man it is folly. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

It is impossible, in other words, to project human morality into cosmic perspectives. The relations that hold between man and man do not hold between man and God. And it is for this very reason that piety offers a cure for spoiled morality. To face upward instead of forward, to turn from reciprocal judgments of approval and disapproval to the all-seeing, merciless critic, to face the last judgment, is an awful experience. To be "salted with fire" immediately destroys all ordinary salt. The consuming fire of divine perfection is so penetrating that a man must necessarily approach it in fear and trembling. When others expose our imperfections, our virtues bristle; but the divine judgment is humiliating in a wholesome sense. Instead of prompting us to defend our rights, it makes us aware of our limitations. Making mutual

sacrifices is, therefore, quite different from bringing an offering to the divine judgment for acceptance.

It is natural and the best witness to man's fall that he avoids being "salted with fire" as long as possible. The day of judgment is postponed to the last. To present oneself for judgment voluntarily and continually, to live in the fear of the Lord instead of trembling at the anticipation of eventual doom, to look steadily beyond social standards of conduct toward perfection of performance, to turn from concern over rights and duties to judgments of truth and beauty, is the mark of piety and at least the beginning of wisdom.

Nativity · Incarnation

God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.
JOHN 3:16.

GOD'S love for the world is not of His essence. The more orthodox theologians tell us that God created the world for His own glory, not out of love for His creatures. The book of *Genesis* seems to have the same idea, for it represents God going about the task of creation as though it were the week's work, pausing after it was finished and saying, as if by some afterthought, "Behold, it is very good." There is nothing in the inherent nature of God that demands His incarnation. He might have remained forever the sheer and timeless essence of perfect being, the principle of good, unalloyed by matter and unmanifest in the course of events, revealed formally to the mind, perhaps, but without individuality and without representation in the events of history. Philosophers, in fact, profess to love such a God and to

seek Him in His own pure being, as if it were more God-like to be disincarnated.

But, apart from philosophers, conventionally religious persons are seldom satisfied to contemplate God in His infinitude, and they worship Him rather in His human hypostases. In spite of philosophical objections to anthropomorphic theology, living gods, that is, gods who are actually worshipped, have human qualities and individual names. Herodotus tells us that before the days of Hesiod and Homer the Greeks did not know the names of their gods. This is evidently false, for we know that spirits even among the most primitive peoples have names long before they become divine. But Herodotus' statement is none the less significant, for it testifies to the great service that Hesiod and Homer rendered to Greek religion in making the Greek gods typically human personalities, whose names signified neither supernatural monsters nor incredible heroes, but immortal men and women.

In the religion of Israel, too, much im-

portance is attached to the name of God. When Moses received the command in the burning bush to deliver Israel out of Egypt, his first question was, "When I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM." But since this practically meaningless name was not adequate at first, the Lord added immediately, "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever and this my memorial unto all generations." As the God of Israel the name of Yahweh has continued to have a concrete meaning and national appeal. But as the king of the universe, the moral governor of all mankind, as he was conceived by some of the prophets, the God of Israel lost his individuality and became confused with the cosmology of

Stoicism, deism, or the religion of nature. His name ceased to have a concrete meaning. This was even more true among the Gentile converts to Christianity, to whom the name of Yahweh was foreign as well as meaningless. It was therefore imperative for both Jewish and Gentile Christians that their God should again take on human form. Hence the word became flesh, and the name of Jesus became exalted above all other names in heaven and on earth. In his name the disciples found comfort and inspiration; in his name they went forth to preach the gospel of salvation. In him they found an individual, an incarnated god, whose kingdom was not the whole universe in general but a heavenly reign of peace and glory in particular. Since those days when the disciples first began to think of themselves as followers of Christ, his personality and name have not been dimmed but, on the contrary, have increased in richness of meaning, in refinement of imagery, and in idealty. Christianity owes much of its power to the worship of the persons of

God, the Father and the Son, and to the veneration of the Mother of God, the Holy Family, and the Saints. Its theology is frankly anthropomorphic, and its forms of expression intensely concrete.

In general, it is characteristic of human love to seek a concrete good, a being with a particular name and individual excellence. In the case of divine love, however, the opposite is true, for its object is always a universal. "God so loved the world,"—not the individual, not even mankind, but "the world," the whole course of temporal being. His love is not literally the love of a provident father caring for each of his children personally. It is more like the love of the artist for his art, the devotion of a man to his profession, or the love of a nation for its law and institutions. God loves the world as the material instrument of creation, not for its own sake, but because in it He can manifest His glory. That God should see fit to be revealed to man, or to any being, is appropriately described as an act of love, for without

it human love would be impossible in any ideal sense. Men could no doubt fall in love, as we say, but love is not redemptive, does not lead from the heat of passion into the light of beauty, unless the particular object loved is seen in the light of God's glory. In his own lifetime, Jesus was popularly known as a "friend of sinners," and doubtless many a sinner valued his friendship; but this friendship took on a totally new meaning and transformed itself into a different kind of love when the sinners began to see God in their friend and were led through him to the love of God. In this way the descent of God into the realm of particulars elevates human love by the vision of universals. In order to be incarnated at all God must become a particular redeemer. But if with this divine descent into the world God were to dissipate His love on particulars, His love would likewise descend to human levels and would lose its redeeming power.

Divine love is incarnate in Christ, therefore, in the sense that in his life and death as

an individual he exhibits perfect devotion to God. It is with true insight that the Church has always emphasized the genuinely human career of Christ in the face of those sophisticated, Greekish theologians who sought to interpret him as an embodied angel, or as the *Logos*, or as in some other way both more and less than human. He was born as an infant, lived as a man among men, and suffered the extreme penalties of human existence. For unless Christ is perfectly human, the idea of the incarnation is pointless.

The mystery of the incarnation, therefore, consists in the fact that, though God sends His only begotten Son into the world that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, He so loves the world that even His only begotten Son must submit to the general course of human life and exhibit the truth that only he who is willing to perish shall gain eternal life.

Epiphany · Revelation

This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.
MATTHEW 3:17.

IN the ancient East men followed the stars, and again in our own day professional wise men have made a persistent search of the stars for a revelation of God. There is a long and pathetic quest that links the star of the three Magi to the cosmic rays of our contemporary scientists. For centuries men have observed diligently the courses of the stars, plotted the conjunctions of the planets, measured the velocities and distances of constellations, and computed the energies of stellar combustions and radiations, in the hope of detecting in all this science some light to guide them on their way and some hints of meaning that might make this vast drift of burning masses intelligible in terms of human careers and measures. We can readily imagine the dismay of the three wise men when the star that prom-

ised them a royal theophany at Jerusalem led them to a humble home in Bethlehem, and we can sympathize with the inner perturbations that must have accompanied their regal gifts to the child of Mary. It may be true that the wise men would not have found the revelation of God if they had not studied the stars, but it is also true that their star led them away from the study of the stars to the adoration of an infant.

The truth contained in this fable has been abundantly repeated in human experience, though it is still the wise men of the East rather than of the West who are most ready to acknowledge it. The revelation of God comes to the wise, but not where they expect it. It comes to astronomers, but not through astronomy. For, though the heavens declare the glory of God, they do not reveal His wisdom, and the stars continue to twinkle in mockery on the wisdom of the East and the science of the West.

To the Jews the incarnation was even more of a mystery than to the Magi. To them the

very idea was blasphemous. They had been accustomed to thinking of revelation as a voice. God speaks, but no man has ever seen His face. Consequently they were willing to listen to the prophetic "Thus saith the Lord" and were diligent in studying the Word of God, hoping thereby to follow an absolute law and to learn an incontrovertible truth. To them the "Word of His mouth" was the creative and governing principle of the world. We can imagine with what incredulity and indignation they heard the dramatic story that at the baptism of Jesus the voice of the Lord was heard for the last time, announcing, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." From then on God was to live among men, guiding them less by oracle than by example. No doubt the disciples hesitated long before they confessed their suppressed desire to the Master, "We would *see* God," for this wish was contrary to their whole religious training.

Like the Jews, the Protestants have emphasized the Word of God, and especially in

these latter days certain German apocalyptic prophets have reasserted the belief that revelation comes in and through the Word. The implication of this theology is that, since God is revealed in the Word, He must be revealed as a transcendent and eternal truth, reconciling the contradictions and overcoming the crises of human existence. It is worth noting, therefore, that such a philosophy is not implied in the orthodox idea of incarnation. No doubt it is a natural trait of human frailty to desire truth by revelation, but the Christian doctrine of revelation by incarnation is not a doctrine of truth but of redemption. In Christ, God reveals not His essence, nor His truth, nor His law, but His love. For this reason the Catholic faith is grounded not on the teachings of Christ, nor on any word of God, but on the person of Christ—his redeeming flesh and blood. I do not wish to deny the value of the Bible, nor the inspired beauty of Christ's teachings, but I believe that only in so far as these teachings are an integral part of the life

of Christ, only in so far as they are what the Church aptly calls "the Living Word," can they be called "revealed." And I think it is both Christian and catholic to believe that God was incarnated in order to reveal His love, not in order to reveal the truth or the law.

It is necessary, however, to consider in what sense Christ is the only begotten Son of God. This question might seem purely academic, since among Christians there has never been a serious belief in more than one redeemer. Recently, however, as in the time of Jesus, the term "son of God" has been subjected to such loose usage that it is now common in certain circles that consider themselves Christian to speak as though the divine principle were incarnate in all men, as though all were alike sons of God, sharing in "the Christ consciousness." Such Christian Buddhism is really blasphemy and ignores entirely the traditional distinction between the begotten Son of God and the children of God by redemption and adoption. There

can be only one Christ, since whatever is revealed of divine love is necessarily attributed to the life of Christ. If he is not the perfect and living embodiment of divine love, he is not Christ; and if he is, any number of other sons whom God might conceivably send into the world would be identical. Christianity is, therefore, essentially committed to the worship of a single divine saviour.

Religions such as those of the Greeks and Hindus can admit a pantheon of individual divinities, each idealizing some specific attribute or group of attributes. Such polytheistic idolatry is no less reasonable nor ideal, but its iconography and theology are necessarily different from those of a religion like Christianity, which, instead of worshipping a group of statuesque divinities, assimilates all the divine qualities to a living being, or rather, to a divine life. The Christ life is intended to embody and co-ordinate all the virtues of a whole pantheon, and, though there are many types of Christians, they all participate in the *imitatio Christi*. Even the

greatest Saints are said to be but particular exemplifications of one or the other of Christ's perfections. Consequently the living Christ, regardless of what scholars tell us from time to time about the so-called historical Jesus, is ample enough to express the devotion of all sorts and conditions of men, and there has never been a feeling among Christians that Christ is not a sufficient incarnation of the divine.

Some apology is due, however, to members of other faiths for the interpretation that Christian churches have placed on this doctrine of the only begotten Son. Jewish prophecy, Roman imperialism, and evangelical enthusiasm have combined to generate the belief that "there is salvation in no other name under heaven." (This doctrine was first announced by Peter, "filled with the Holy Ghost." The *Acts of the Apostles* adds immediately after this pronouncement, "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled.") The

prophecy of Malachi is so interpreted in the opening Sentences for Epiphany: "From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering; for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts." (*Malachi* 1:11.) This prophecy is applied explicitly to Christ by St. Paul. "At the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . and . . . every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord." (*Philippians* 2:10–11.) This is, of course, the basis of the idea of the church universal. To what extent the Christian churches will abide by this doctrine is just now a burning issue, in view of the recent re-orientation of the missionary enterprise. That "no other name" can be given to Christians is evident, for anyone who finds salvation in some other name is *ipso facto* not a Christian. But to assert that there can be salvation in no other religion is tantamount to maintaining that the truth can be spoken

in only one language. Incarnation and revelation are necessarily relative, since they involve man. God must speak to man in a language that man can understand, and if all men do not understand the same language, God must speak in several.

For God, being universal, seeks individuation; and man, being individual, wishes to be "like God" and lord it over the whole world. It is only human to "love" the world by seeking "dominion over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." It is truly divine, on the other hand, not *so* to love the world, and in this respect, as in others, Christ was truly the incarnation and revelation of the divine, for he chose rather to give his life in obedience to the Father.

Lent · Contrition

Two men went up into the temple to pray; . . . The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men. . . . the publican . . . smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

LUKE 18:10–13.

IN ancient times the Lenten season was generally a season of hardships; and the fasts, scrutinies, and exorcisms of Lent were not sheer ecclesiastical impositions but genuine expressions of actual conditions. It was a season of pestilence and of other diseases that came in the wake of a long winter spent in cold, cramped, and unsanitary quarters. Influenza epidemics of today are mere vestiges of the prevalence of serious scourges during this season. It was also a season of food shortage; and what food there was, was of the poorest kind, perhaps stale or spoiled, certainly monotonous. Those who could get fresh fish were fortunate. In general it was the most disagreeable and dangerous season of the year, and still is so in the country.

Modern, urban, industrial life has largely removed these conditions and has even tended in the opposite direction. The Lenten season is generally the height of the social season, the gayest of the year. The hardships of winter and disease are minimized. Under these circumstances many think it absurd to maintain the ecclesiastical calendar and to celebrate Lent with fasting, penance, and prayer.

But recently the smug sense of security has been rudely shattered. War, famine, unemployment, poverty, and despair are all about us. And those of us who may not be much affected personally can scarcely avoid the sense of belonging to a privileged class. And if our privileges do not weigh upon our consciences, they must at least suggest that our turn may come, as unexpectedly as it has come to thousands of others, to feel the pinch of necessity and to realize that our happiness and our very existence are precarious. Under such circumstances Lent is certainly still meaningful and appropriate,

though to suggest the celebration of Lent by fasting, by the imposition of ceremonious and merely symbolical deprivations, when there is so much compulsory real fasting, seems almost a cruel gesture. The important need is for the sensitiveness that induces men to put on sackcloth and ashes, for sincere confession of the evil of our ways, and for giving serious thought to the miserable state of affairs in which we find ourselves.

We have little reason to be proud in the sight of God. Who can escape a sense of shame and defeat, when he sees the horrible mess that in other years we dared to call our civilization? Everywhere there is an odor of decay. Our politics, our business, our currency, our courts, our press, our education, our pleasures, and our products—how many of them would we be willing to hold up before God and say: This, this represents my work and my ideas? The fruit of human depravity is evident even to our own corrupted eyes. Our customary security is shattered, our confidence gone, our failure

conspicuous. We must be conscious that our stupidity and corruption are tragic, not merely temporary lapses. There is no use whistling to keep up our courage; no use closing our eyes to decadence; no use taking our blunders like "good sports."

This modern ethics of sportsmanship is exceedingly superficial. We duck our heads when war, drought, and starvation fall upon us; we do not complain nor are we zealous in fixing blame. We take our so-called misfortunes doggedly and hope for better days. Such animal faith and childish morals must sooner or later display their irresponsibility.

Man has always wished to be rid of responsibility for evil. He has blamed nature, fortune, society, or God, according to his philosophical fashions; but God and his analogues likewise have been notoriously unwilling to assume the responsibility for evil. They either assume an attitude of indifference, or they accept responsibility only for the good. In this divine madness we share; none of us is willing to blame himself. And

being unwilling to hold ourselves responsible, we cannot consistently find any one on whom we can pin responsibility. So much must be obvious by this time. The policeman cannot help it; the judge cannot; the senator cannot; the president cannot; the employer cannot; the banker cannot. It is an old story, and a childish business, this locating the culprit elsewhere. Our society is as much ours as anybody's, and its corruption is ours. Our wills may not be depraved, but our works evidently are.

The first act of penitence is not confession of fault but of guilt. It is important to recognize corruption even before the question of assigning responsibility is considered. The diagnosis of responsibility, involving the problem of causation and cure, is a matter for specialists in private; but the confession of sin is appropriately public. Men go up into the temple to pray, not to argue responsibility. Prior to the determination of responsibility, therefore, sin is not a private possession. Corruption is collective. For purposes

of confession it will not do to say, "I thank thee that I am not as other men." We are all as other men, sharers in public depravity, and it is fitting that we should confess in public not our class consciousness, not each his own sins, but each the sins of all.

This appeal to our collective conscience does not imply that we are collectively to blame; nor that we can collectively create a new heaven and a new earth. Salvation will come whence it may, from above or below. But all of us, in so far as we can discover more evil than we can cure, have abundant reason for going up to the temple to pray. At least we can collectively admit our failures, whether we can avoid them or not. The religious confession of sin is not necessarily a substitute for practical reform, or for revolution; it is not necessarily an assumption of responsibility, but it is at least a mark of contrition, an expression of our dissatisfaction with what we do.

In this sense, therefore, it is highly appropriate, especially now, that we cast aside

for a season our customary confidence, our pride and false security, and face frankly the cruel and disgusting state of human affairs, admitting that we have done those things which we ought not to have done and left undone those things which we ought to have done and that there is very little health in us. Quite literally and seriously we have never had more overwhelming cause to be fearful, more damning cause to be humble, more baffling problems for our limited intelligence, or a more suitable occasion for praying: Lord be merciful to us miserable sinners.

Palm Sunday · The Kingdom of Christ

Nevertheless I must walk today, and tomorrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

LUKE 13:33–35.

If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!

LUKE 19:42.

MEN are by nature either followers or leaders. The fact that Jesus was neither makes him one of the most baffling figures of human history. His "followers," with all the trappings of humility, have from time to time attempted and are today attempting to establish the rule of Christ over this world. Other "followers" have abandoned the world as completely as is humanly possible, giving themselves over to temptations, lamentations, and meditations. So many have

been the ways, both in theory and practice, by which Christians have aimed to define Christ's relation to "the world" that it is futile to seek a clear norm. The sayings of Jesus himself, which report him as having come neither to rule the world nor to judge it, but to save it, make the problem no less difficult; for how salvation is independent of both government and judgment is not easy to understand.

The story of Palm Sunday epitomizes this puzzle. Jesus, weeping at the sight of Jerusalem, enters the city riding on the colt of an ass, surrounded by his disciples, who stage a messianic entry for him and announce the coming of the kingdom of David. Just before the entry (so the story goes in *Luke*) and as a warning to those who "thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear," Jesus told the parable of the nobleman who went to "receive for himself a kingdom" and who, when he had returned to "his citizens that hated him," said: "Those mine enemies, which would not that I should

reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." In any event, it seems some of the disciples expected a display of power and were willing to fight for the kingdom of David even up to the hour of Jesus' captivity. The cleansing of the temple, the scathing denunciations of priests and teachers, were probably regarded by many as the mere beginning of a revolutionary struggle. Few disciples were present to hear Jesus announce to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world," and still fewer remained to see the "King of the Jews" crucified at the hands of the religious leaders and political governors of the people. Small wonder that the minds of the early Christians were confused by these events, and that Christians ever since have been more confident that the kingdom of heaven is at hand than they have been clear about the nature of this kingdom.

One confusion, which troubles us no less than it troubled Hellenized Jews, is the identification of the Messiah with the Christ or Saviour. The messianic mission implies some

form of divine administration over a particular nation's affairs, some form of theocracy, at least a holy church; the salvation of the world, on the other hand, is a task too radical for government of any kind, human or divine. The new Jerusalem or "holy commonwealth" may possibly be brought about by a messianic revolution, but salvation is a continuous process implying an ever-present saviour and involving problems which exist under any government. It concerns the whole question of the standard of living. To a certain extent one's standard of living is determined by circumstances, that is, by the dispensations of God, the provisions of human government, and the general system of production. But even admitting these circumstances to be more or less determining, there is still enough opportunity for variation to make the choice of possible standards of living a genuine issue and the most intimate and personal of all problems. And, admitting that legislation, precepts, and principles have a certain utility in this regard, still the

pattern of one's life is to a large extent an individual creation. The art of living cannot be taught; it must be learned by experience. And experience comes, apart from one's own, from the study of other lives. It is Christ's life on earth, more than his word, or his ascension, or his church, that is the source of his saving power. A saviour is a life, a living pattern.

To follow Christ is to be inspired by his example. Inspiration is not easily defined, but it is commonly experienced. It produces, strictly speaking, not an *imitatio*, nor a mere *devotio*, but a *gratia*. Grace is the name of an effect, rather than of its cause. The entrance of divine grace into human life is the measure of the power of the life of Christ. His followers, accordingly, are not those who bear witness to his wonder-working, still less those who cry "Hosannah" whenever a new saviour appears at the gates, but those who can follow Christ understandingly, whose minds and imaginations are not blind to the essential qualities of his life and who in admiring

these qualities find power and direction in living well their own lives.

This power to save human life from the follies and miseries to which it is subject is a power distinct from "the kingdoms of this world." It is not a form of rule, jurisdiction, or administration. It is nevertheless a power *in* this world; it governs more than governments do. One of the most impressive and paradoxical traits of this divine power to save is its disdain for the tactics of leadership. To Christ Jerusalem was not a city of potential followers, nor even of active enemies, but an object of compassion. The kingly dignity of Christ appears in the sorrow that filled him at his "triumphal entry." What makes him more than a prophet denouncing the vices of Jerusalem, more than a messiah bringing in a kingdom, is his weeping over the city, his grief over human blindness. Such grief is not "other-worldly" disdain for the kingdoms of this world, nor is it passing judgment on them; it is a sharing, a suffering, a love. And by such acts of compassion Christ

continues to build a dominion over the minds, tastes, and conduct of men that can easily be distinguished from ecclesiastical and political Christendom. The kingdoms that have been erected in the name of Christ, the "dictatorships of the Holy Spirit," as they are now being called, are usually new Jerusalems, stoning the prophets and ignorant of the "things which belong unto their peace." A Christian today, as Christ then, is not apt to find his ministry on the throne, nor among the zealots for a new kingdom, nor on the battlefield, nor among the mourners outside the walls, but within the city, the temple, the court-house, and on the way to the cross. He must be not a conqueror but one prepared to endure without pride the acclaim of the people and without malice the condemnation of their leaders.

Good Friday · Martyrdom

The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it. . . .

Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. . . .

Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. . . . And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. . . .

Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. . . .

And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough. And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives. . . . And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. . . . And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly. . . . And he . . . saith unto them, behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

And they laid their hands on him, and took him. . . . And Jesus answered and said unto them, Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and with staves to take me? I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not. . . . And they led Jesus away to the high priest. . . . And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? But he held his peace, and answered nothing. . . .

Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall . . . and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? . . . Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight . . . but now is my kingdom not from hence. . . . For this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. . . .

And the soldiers . . . began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews! And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees worshipped him. . . . And [the people] cried, saying: Crucify him, crucify him. . . .

But as they led him away . . . there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. . . . For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?

And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. . . . And set

up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. . . .

And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying . . . He trusted in God. . . . The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth. . . . And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. . . . But the other . . . said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. . . .

Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?

Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.

It is finished.

COMMENTARY on this sacred picture is essentially irreverent. The power of the Cross cannot be told; it must be seen and felt. And any one who is not overwhelmed by the figure of Christ crucified will never understand its significance. In the face of this brutal, stark tragedy all the doctrines of the atonement, of vicarious suffering, and of self-sacrifice that moralists have invented to give the crucifixion a philosophical frame are tawdry, if not absurd.

Hundreds and thousands of these Roman

crosses were erected on the hillsides of Judea; moreover Rome was only one empire among scores of others that have made and are still making martyrs. The Cross of Christ is the chief historical symbol of that immortal death which in all ages has commanded the reverence of mankind. The bones of a martyr are the surest foundation for any altar; and a faith for which men die is more powerful than a faith for which men kill. This is not a question of ideals but of fact; a question, not of justice, but of power.

At first, the Cross seems, as many have taken it to be, the symbol of weakness, defeat, and death. Christ's disdain of the powers of this world, his unflinching defiance of all physical force, which certainly constitutes the basic theme of the story, has always impressed the worldly-wise as sheer divine madness. Witness the self-assurance of the Roman soldiers as they taunted the crucified "King of the Jews." Yet it was not long before Roman emperors themselves bowed before the Cross their soldiers had erected and began

to exploit the power of the crucified Jew in order to bolster the waning power of Roman empire. Since the days of Constantine the Cross has been used almost continually somewhere or other to sanction political prowess, if not down-right brute force. Churches have joined with empires in using the Cross as the Romans did instead of enduring it as did the King of the Jews. Nevertheless the Cross of Christ still stands above the Christian church, or even against it, as a symbol and inspiration of martyrdom. Whatever one may make of the teachings or the life of Christ, his death remains the perfect symbol of a solitary preacher, of an agonized spirit, condemned by man but not really forsaken by God. For though the power of the Church may crumble, the teachings of Christ may go unheeded, the theory of the atonement may be forgotten, yet before Christ on the Cross men of every creed or none must always continue to bow. Though they probably understand little of what they feel, they are none the less moved

irresistibly, not merely as tragedy moves them to pity and tears, but to shame and to worship.

There are many crosses that fail to exert this power. Not every cross bears a martyr. Of the three crosses erected on Calvary two were for men who, though they have many imitators, have few disciples. The two malefactors are also tragic figures, and we pass by their crosses too carelessly if we shrug our shoulders and say, "They defied the law." They may have shown more physical courage than Jesus did, but there is a difference between criminal defiance and Christ-like defiance of the law. The criminal, like the emperor, plays the game of violence and, when he loses, meets a violent death. His death is his nemesis, and his tragedy is at best a case of the classic Greek tragedy in which a natural doom overtakes him who seeks to evade it. But the tragedy of Jesus is different. He is not one of them that take the sword and perish by the sword, but one of them that scorn the sword and nevertheless perish by it.

This use of the sword to put an end to those who trust in God has always proved a dubious expedient. The life of Jesus would probably have been in vain had it not led to the Cross. And when Christ in agony said, "It is finished," his real life had just begun. For the death of Christ is immortal because it bore a definite relation to his life. The crucifixion is the culmination, not the mere termination, of the life of Christ. It is the crowning testimony of his devotion to a kingdom which is not of this world and of his refusal to yield to the temptations of what his contemporaries might have considered a career. His Cross thus became the symbol of perfect obedience to the voice of God. Just as in Plato's *Republic* the perfectly just man is represented as having a reputation for injustice, so the perfectly powerful man in the Christian revelation is presented to us on the Cross. The apparently lifeless body on the Cross is really a perfect power, for men do not need to be compelled to adore it; of itself it draws all men unto him.

Easter · Resurrection

If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. . . .

But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him. . . .

It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.

I. Corinthians 15:19–20, 35–38, 42–46.

NOT being a historian I cannot presume to explain what St. Paul meant by these remarkable words, but I can explain what truth I find in them. If our natural bodies are as seeds that in perishing produce fruit, and if the fruit that we bear is more

glorious than the body that died, then the resurrection is not a resuscitation of our flesh, but a generation of a new and finer body, bearing the same relation to our present body as the fruit to the seed. The earthly body which lives and dies is fruitful, but its fruitage is not of this earth. "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power." The fool who asks how this is possible is told to look about him and see what happens at every Eastertide.

The significant point in the doctrine of resurrection is not the continuation of life but the fruit of death. It is the faith that the slow decay that constitutes the winter of life shall be productive of something new, glorious, and incorruptible in the spring. There is a sense, of course, in which any natural body bears fruit. Since any material event has consequences, the world is slightly different than it would have been without our bodies and their careers. But this is evidently

not the sense of the text nor the meaning of the faith. Few persons are content with having only consequences; they hope for fruits. They feel satisfied only if they are productive—if their lives and deaths lead to something other than simply more life and death. This hope for fruit is the substance of the faith in resurrection.

It is, therefore, much more profound than that pagan doctrine with which it is frequently confused, the immortality of the soul. The doctrine of immortality has always attempted to make death unreal or at least insignificant. And it has therefore emphasized a mere continuation of life, as though life in itself ought to be indefinitely prolonged and death take a holiday. Against this vain ideal of pagan heroes and emperors, the popular Mysteries and the Christian Jews asserted the doctrine of the resurrection of the flesh into a spiritual body. St. Paul says very significantly, "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." There is a

profound difference between a living soul and a quickening spirit. If every living soul automatically became a quickening spirit, there would be little need for the Christian faith. Not all that sleep have fruits; but all that live nourish the hope that they may bear fruit after they have fallen asleep. This hope is not always gratified. Still less is it given us to know what fruit we shall bear, if any.

In this consists the essential difference between the doctrine of resurrection, that is, the divine gift of an incorruptible fruitage, and the concept of natural causation, or, as the Hindus call it, the law of *karma*. Ordinarily when we sow we expect that "what a man soweth that shall he reap," and we anticipate our fruit on the basis of our knowledge of the seed. But when we sow our bodies and minds, as it were, we cannot predict the fruit. We sow "bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him." This is the essence of faith, that, not know-

ing to what in the end our lives are contributing, we trust in a creative God to provide a glorious and incorruptible body for the one we bury. This faith is not based on knowledge; it is inevitably in large part a blind faith, based on the contingencies of history and the inscrutability of the future. Without this hope of glory we may continue to live, but only with it can we continue to work. For to give ourselves gladly to the future life, to an unknown, God-given, new body requires genuine piety and an almost instinctive trust in God. If we ourselves could determine the future and dedicate ourselves definitely to bearing fruit after our own kind, religious faith would give way to applied science, and in all probability the new body would inherit the corruption of the old. As it is, however, we can have faith in a contingent, transcendent fruitage and in at least the possibility that the new body of the future life will be "raised in incorruption." For God is not like the first Adam, a mere

living soul, but like the second, a quickening spirit. His work is not reproduction but creation. Out of the death of natural bodies, He raises up gradually a spiritual body, the fruits of them that sleep, embodying something of His own eternal glory.

The theory of the Church is that the spiritual body of Christ consists in the communion of his saints. The great community of saints is, to be sure, a glorious fruit of a divine life and death, but this doctrine would be sheer blasphemy if it meant that the fruit of Christ's death was nothing more than the establishment of a church. What justifies that death, if anything can, is the living faith whereby the saints are supposedly united and see the resurrected Christ, not in the actual merits of his followers, but in the hope of their own ultimate resurrection or fruitage. Christ lives in so far as Christians hope for their own resurrection.

If this is the substance of our text, it is evidently not a foolish superstition that keeps

the Easter message alive; and we can understand why the belief in resurrection always has been and probably always will be regarded by Christians as the cap-stone of their faith.

Pentecost · The Spirit of Truth

When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself.

John 16:13.

THE Holy Spirit is the fulfilment of incarnation, the abiding, indwelling presence of God. He is, therefore, not a "ghost," but *in* man. The essence of the divine spirit in man has been variously conceived and admits of no clear definition. In the text above, he is the Spirit of truth. Elsewhere he is the Comforter, the Advocate, the Spirit of peace, and of freedom. Without attempting an adequate doctrine of the Holy Spirit, we may at least raise the question of what relation there is, if any, between the spirits of truth, peace, and freedom.

The truth, we are told, is to make us free. From what does truth free us? It does not free us from one another. The spirit of truth is not a spirit of inner conviction, of personal

assurance, or of ineffable insight. The search for truth commits us to a co-operative quest. Truth is by nature social, the goal of a community of seekers. It is the spirit of the laboratory. The scientist's workshop must be open to any fellow-scientist, and its products must be subject to confirmation, criticism, amendment. Verification is a continuous social process. There are authorities in science, to be sure, but not in the sense that they "speak of themselves." They are acquainted with the work of their fellow-inquirers and can interpret the experience of the whole community of truth-seekers. This is the first sure mark of the spirit of truth, that "he shall not speak of himself." Truth is, socially speaking, binding not freeing; it binds us to an infinite community—a community, the antithesis of Babel, in which each of the "devout men out of every nation under heaven" can hear other members "speak in his own language the wonderful works of God."

Nor does the spirit of truth free us from the law. The Christian Pentecost has been

celebrated traditionally as the beginning of the church and the end of the reign of the Jewish law; by the covenant of grace man is freed from civil theocracy. In one sense this distinction may be justified, for to the spirit of truth there are no commandments. Categorical imperatives are issued to the children of bondage, whose minds are capable only of following rules, not of discovering them. Without law there is no truth; but where law merely commands there is as yet no public spirit of truth. For a truth-seeker law is not only a "form of the will," but an instrument of understanding. Laws are the tools by which truth lives, provided they are understood and not merely obeyed. Obedient "servants" of God do not necessarily possess the indwelling presence of the spirit of truth, but in the community of "sons" of God this spirit is public property. The community is not literally a kingdom but a republic, a collective and voluntary subjection to the understanding of law.

Truth is liberating, therefore, in that it

frees us from subjection to arbitrary commands and from the fear which such bondage entails. Truth brings an inner peace as well as a community of minds. It frees from what Lucretius called religion, the fear of "acts of God," and induces the peace that comes from adequate ideas of the connections existing among such acts. To see ourselves in God, as necessarily in an intelligible realm, brings comfort and resignation. For in so far as we know the truth our opportunities and responsibilities are defined, our expectations are sobered, and our wants become gradually attuned to the will of God.

There is a more positive freedom, however, which the spirit of truth bestows. Through truth comes power. Power is not necessarily nor ideally a coercion of others. It is not even a coercion of natural forces. The so-called dominion of man over nature is really within nature. Man's achievements are also God's; through truth God "worketh in us." Or, to put it conversely, in so far

as we learn to work effectively we work in God. This freedom is the positive freedom of competence; truth-seekers become expert. "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." (*I. Corinthians* 12:7–11.) The republic of the Spirit is not a democracy, and its freedom does not consist in doing as one pleases; it is a community of experience, expertness, or competence,where freedom consists in being able to get what one wants. Such a community engenders mutual confidence and faith, and a genuine fellowship of

faith is the surest witness to the Holy Spirit. Divine illumination is, therefore, aptly described as a flame and a gift of tongues, but it must be carefully distinguished from the fire of enthusiasm and from free speech.

Trinity · The Trinity

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! . . . For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things.

ROMANS 11:33, 36.

THE doctrine of the Trinity is the fruit of philosophers' worship. It is their attempt to explain how creation, redemption, and sanctification are interrelated; how power, love, and truth can have a single being. The idea of the Trinity must therefore be approached abstractly. The ingenuous attempts of pious painters to portray the unity of the Father, the crucified Christ, and the Dove are grotesque if taken as portraits of God. They are obviously icons, symbols of a metaphysical idea, not scenes from a divine life. There is nothing more pathetic than the repeated attempts of the human mind to put life or individuality into what is essentially an idea.

The current view that God the Father is

in essence a personal being, because He is revealed in person, seems to me not only false and superficial but virtually a repudiation of the whole doctrine of the incarnation. For if God the Father were personal, His incarnation would be superfluous; He would not need a Son. Certainly if God could somehow be a conscious individual even before His incarnation, no intelligible reason could be given for believing that it was necessary for God to be incarnated in order to become a saviour. If God is literally a father, and not a mere creator, was not the sacrificial murder of His Son a revelation of His cruelty rather than of His love? Theologians have struggled for ages to evade such blasphemous conclusions, which are none the less inevitable from their premises. Pietistic Unitarians like Channing, who hoped to evade the problem of the Trinity, were unable to solve this basic dilemma; for, while with one breath they were proclaiming complete emancipation from anthropomorphism, with the next they

were praising the fatherhood of God in the most tender and human terms. Personalism must therefore be understood not as a true account of the nature of God but as a pietistic glorification of the Son, who, being a person, is exalted to the place of the Father. Pietism has always shown this tendency.

Of late even personalistic theologians, to say nothing of contemporary philosophers in general, have shown little interest in the Trinity. Many have even pretended to get Christian comfort out of a God who merely "geometrizes." The God of contemporary metaphysics is no more Christian than was the similar God of deism, and it is a confession of extraordinary timidity on the part of Christian philosophers (who are responsible for the doctrine of the Trinity) that they should so readily submit to secular scientists and cosmologists. On the other hand, it may be that they have at last admitted "how unsearchable are the riches of the wisdom and the knowledge of God." The doctrine of the

Trinity really explains nothing; it merely gives symbolical representation to a difficulty.

Power, love, and truth; creation, redemption, and sanctification are evidently "hypostases," forms or aspects of the Being in which we live. Only philosophers would have the temerity to deny so obvious a fact. But how they are related, whether, according to St. Augustine, they are related as the "hypostases" or "faculties" of man are related (doing, feeling, and knowing), or, according to Coleridge, as the essentials of a "perfect society" (the unity of love and truth in the moral life—an idea which Hegel elaborated dialectically), or, according to the mystics, in an essentially unutterable way, or according to any of the other classic systems, there is a genuine philosophical problem here that has as yet received no adequate solution.

To the solution of this problem, however, the Christian story of Genesis, the Fall, the Nativity, Crucifixion, and Pentecost makes

no contribution. The Christian faith does not explain the Trinity: it dramatizes it. There are those philosophers who see in Christianity a synthesis of Greek philosophy and Hebrew myth, but by combining philosophy and myth no real synthesis is created. There is more confusion among Christians than there was among either the Greeks or the Hebrews. The "riches" of the "heritage of the heathen," added to the riches of the prophets, have produced an intellectual heritage for Christians which is well-nigh unsearchable. In Christian thought the mind can easily lose itself. It is prudent, therefore, to regard the doctrine of the Trinity not as a solution of the problem of being, but as a statement of that problem. Two facts are central: the diversified manifestations or hypostases of God, and the unity of the "field" in which these manifestations take place. The idea of the Trinity serves well to keep these facts before us; the exploration of the problem that these facts suggest may well be left to the progress of detailed

discovery. Neither an immediate possession of the great secret nor an admission that it must remain forever a mystery is a justifiable attitude. The life of religion is a life of search and faith rather than of either enthusiasm or mysticism. To continue to seek him "of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things" is more appropriate, even to a Christian, than to profess to have found him.

Now Abideth Faith, Hope, Charity

Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

I. Corinthians 13:13.

WE are dealing here with ultimates, not with the first things in life, but with the abiding, with last resorts, with the basic resources of the moral life, failing which, all is lost. Take away health, wealth, friendship, beauty, justice—all those things that we say make life worth while—and what remains? This is another way of stating Job's problem.

There remains, first, faith. By faith men cling to life even when it is evil. In the familiar definition of faith in the *Epistle to the Hebrews:* "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Here are two quite different conceptions of faith, each of which has played an important part in philosophical traditions as well as in recent controversy. Faith may be either "the

substance of things hoped for" or "the evidence of things not seen."

If faith is a type of evidence, it serves as a basis for beliefs. It is a ground of conviction, assurance, or certainty. It is easy in the contemporary philosophic atmosphere to find a fresh apology for faith. It is not an uncritical apology, a new and easy road to old superstitions; it is the outcome of the most rigorous philosophical and scientific analysis. Some of our beliefs, and we know which ones, must inevitably have a practical, voluntary, or animal basis, and the word "faith" seems not inappropriate to designate this fact. We have so much evidence for unseen objects that the other side of the moon has become a symbol for real physical objects in general. Certain philosophers have not been slow in giving this a religious coloring. Not only the fact that we must make postulates, but the fact that we seem forced, practically, to make certain postulates rather than others, gives faith an objective status; and when such objective faith is given a religious interpre-

tation, it makes religious belief an inevitable property of a sound mind and a healthy human animal.

The chief significance of this philosophy of faith, however, lies not so much in the fact that it gives religion a rational status as in the kind of subject-matter that is assigned to religion. To make a god out of a "well-ordered series," out of mathematical infinites, out of space, out of the objects of physics, has in it even less comfort for traditional religious conceptions than Spinoza's God proved to have; and it is not amazing that only the most desperate and drowning souls have clutched at such straws. Faith, in a religious sense, must be carefully distinguished from an epistemological or "animal" faith, and it would be a great boon both to philosophy and to religion if other philosophers could keep their "animal faith" and their philosophy of religion as far apart as Mr. Santayana does. The epistemological gods will some day certainly be regarded as the most curious and ridiculous creations of modern

theology. They exist for those men of little faith who welcome evidence for almost anything "unseen" on the general principle that seeing is not believing.

But faith as the substance of things hoped for has a religious quality. Euclidean space may be a legitimate object of belief, but it is scarcely a thing to be hoped for. We pass now from the world of postulates to that of possibilities, from foundations to goals, from principles to ends in view, from convictions to aspirations. When faith is viewed under the category of hope rather than under that of belief, its subject-matter shifts from our ground of assurance in the existence or reality of a thing to our willingness to look forward to it as an object of our interest or endeavor. Faith constitutes the willingness to pursue the things for which we hope, and religion is more like a search for something missing than like a system of beliefs about the invisible. In so far as religion is a life of faith, and in so far as God is a symbol for the objects of faith, we may put this in more tra-

ditional language by saying that religion is concerned not so much with the problem of finding evidence for the existence of the unseen as with the problem of seeking a god who may be seen but who now hides his face. It is not evidence for the existence of the unseen but willingness to search for that which we hope to see. When we say we have faith in justice, we do not mean that we believe justice exists unseen. Rather we believe in it chiefly because we hope that by our efforts it may come to exist. We hope for those things which we may see in the future. It seems quite evident that such faith is more closely allied to religious experience than is a mere belief that something is true or real. In general, believing *in*, as distinguished from believing *that*, marks the distinction between religious faith and scientific postulation or opinion.

If such faith has any vitality, it is because hope is substantial. One may, if one chooses, take life as just that medley of order and chaos, of unity and diversity, of harmony

and strife, of ignorance and knowledge, that we discover it to be. One may regard it as a farce in which we play silly roles, or perhaps, if it seems to possess dignity, as a tragedy in which we battle against fate, or even, if one possesses sufficient imagination, as a *divina commedia*. There is no refuting such philosophies. But, on the other hand, we may find life radically adventurous. We may look upon ourselves as embarked on a voyage of discovery. We may entertain hopes and act upon them. We may make demands on life; we may exercise faith. But such faith, precisely because it makes demands on life and is radically adventurous, guarantees nothing. It takes risks; it undertakes a search for something that *may* possibly never be found. A search begins in darkness. We know not where lies our salvation nor whither we should turn. But intelligence discovers pointers from time to time that make the search not wholly blind. Our intelligence is, in the words of Santayana,

a torch of smoky pine
That lights the pathway but one step ahead
Across a void of mystery and dread.

In such a precarious situation it is a great temptation to

Bid, then, the tender light of faith to shine
By which alone the mortal heart is led
Unto the thinking of the thought divine.

But faith has no light of its own. Faith is a moving force, not a light. Faith is precisely that which needs illumination to bring it to its goal. By faith we know nothing. By faith we are engaged in a search.

It is usually supposed, especially by the idealists, that a common faith is the essential moral fibre of every society. Take away a uniting faith and the group disintegrates. But, does it? Do men give up when they lose faith? We are only too familiar with the spectacle of collapsing faiths. And we see about us any number of men who manage to live without faith and societies that hold together without a single uniting purpose. For

when faith fails, men resort to hope. Hope dies harder than faith and lives a ghostly, "spiritual" life after its vital substance has disintegrated. Even when we lose a reasonable assurance that our aims can be realized, we still say, "Some day, perhaps." We cling to our wishes long after our reason has abandoned them. Our thoughts turn to heaven, to another world, to perfect cities and utopian dreams. Those whom hope does not lead to heaven are, as Dante said, in hell. And yet, though men and nations despair, though hope fails them, all is not lost.

There still abides charity. It is the greatest of the virtues because it can abide alone. Charity "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." Men without faith, even without hope, can still live together in peace if they have charity.

Charity does not mean love; it means

charitableness, tolerance, forbearance, what the eighteenth-century moralists called "disinterested benevolence." If we examine our actual societies frankly, we soon discover that they live less by faith and hope than by charity. We treat with courtesy those whom we do not respect, and we do business with those whom we call hopeless. Our social, especially our civic, relations imply our willingness to tolerate many whose faith we do not share and to co-operate with many whom we hope not to meet in heaven. Even family relations and "brotherhood" need more than love if they are to endure. I venture to call this the Christian theory of society, in contrast to the idealistic on the one hand and the economic on the other. Society is a community of charity—not at best, but in the last analysis. Charity can hold men together when all else has failed. This might be taken as a Christian solution of Job's problem, though Christians are often less charitable even towards their fellow-Christians than Job was towards his patronizing friends.

Charity is the *sine qua non* of morality and society and peace. It may not be pleasant or honorable, but it is necessary.

I do not claim that charity is merely a last resort. I mean that in times of trial, when faiths become untenable and hopes vain, we discover how essential charity is and how desperate our situation would be without it. With charity a genial sense of humor and effective satire can find nourishment; without it, good humor gives way to bitter invective and then to physical conflict. For when tolerance is gone there comes the war of all against all.

Perhaps my idea of charity has little to do with Paul's. Nevertheless I can call attention to the fact that this Pauline Epistle comes to us from a time, much like ours, when faiths and hopes were failing. There were many Jewish communities in the Roman Empire whose faith in the restoration of Israel was shattered when the temple was destroyed and whose hope in the speedy coming of the kingdom of God became

dimmer and dimmer as the years rolled on. When the prophets of both moral faith and apocalyptic hope failed, the Jews were forced to turn to charity (even towards Gentiles) as the basis of their communal life.

Both complacent dogmatists and revolutionary enthusiasts find charity morally nauseating. The world must be overcome, not endured! This has been the essence of the Christian faith, as of modern revolutions, but the process of bringing in the kingdom, or more accurately, of waiting for it to come (since in both the Christian and the "scientific" apocalyptic gospels the new order is said to be inevitable), entails so many hardships that in practice the community of the faithful becomes a community of martyrs, whose chief concern is their ability to endure. Towards one another the "saints" or "comrades" exhibit a love of communion, and towards the hostile world they sooner or later adopt the charitable attitude of "Forgive them, they know not what they do." Thus it is precisely such exclusive communi-

ties of faith that eventually generate charity most conspicuously. It may be that Gibbon was right when he remarked that "it was not in *this* world that the primitive Christians were desirous of making themselves either agreeable or useful," but the history of the fall of Rome and the rise of Christendom proves that the Christians became so, whether or not they were desirous of these virtues. For though the meek may not inherit the earth through their meekness, they would soon destroy their inheritance without it. It is the discipline of charity, produced in conflict, that has proved a more lasting basis of societies than the faiths or kingdoms out of which the conflict grew.

Faith and charity are not necessarily alternatives, nor is charity merely the euthanasia of faith; but in a world of fighting faiths, charity alone makes life tolerable.

Charity is, however, more than a virtue: it can be a benediction. It endureth not only all things but the totality of things. When charity becomes a dominant trait of the soul

it generates a piety toward being in general. The capacity to "lie down in peace" comes to few, for in few is charity more than a moral discipline. This holy peace is a contentment, not a complacency. It passes understanding. It is not the product of faith, for from faith come judgment and labor. It is not the fruit of hope, for from hope spring ambition, heaven, and hell. It comes only from charity. Charity "seeketh not its own," not even immortality. Immortals cannot lie down in peace; they go down in history. Princes, saints, and prophets are doomed to personal immortality, to rise and fall in the purgatory of human memory and judgment, tormented tormentors of generations. To live in history is a living death, not perfect peace. Perfect deliverance transcends human society and history. It is complete absorption. When life's faiths and hopes vanish and the body sinks back into its source, charity endures its ultimate test. To be able to lie down in peace and to rest in God is both the end and the reward of charity.

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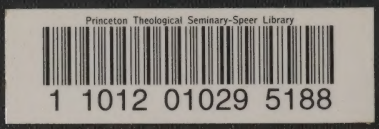
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